THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d). The road from Moradabad- Tanda-Bajpur-Haldwani is not a Defence road. As such no information about this road is available in the Ministry of defence.

Import of Palm Oil and Rubber

230. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by the Government to reduce the import of palm oil and rubber;

(b) whether new areas have been identified to grow their crops; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). All out efforts are being made for reducing the import of rubber by increasing natural rubber production within the country. These include:-

I) Price protection for indigenously produced rubber in order to encourage rubber growers to produce more rubber.

ii) Undertaking comprehensive research on all basic as well as adaptive aspects of cultivation and production at the Rubber Research Institute of India and transferring proven technology on extensive scale to rubber growers through Board's extension service machinery.

iii) Implementation of development schemes designed to expand area under plantation, replant old and uneconomic plantations, promote use of high Yielding cultivatrs, improve yield from existing plantations and upgrade quality of rubber.

iv) Laying emphasis on spreading rubber cultivation to non-traditional areas.

Future potential for expansion of rubber area is estimated to be about 11,50,000 hectares spread over in the North-Eastern Region and States like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Andamans & Nicobar Islands etc.

With regard to Palm Oil, information will be collected and laid on the Table of the House.

[*English*]

Exports

231. SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exports have registered a downward trend in recent months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to increase the exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) According to the provisional figures, India's exports during the first half of the current financial year i.e. April-September, 1991 amounted to Rs. 18711 crores as compared to Rs 15097 crores during April-September, 1990, thereby registering a growth of 23.9% in rupee terms.

Export growth in the second quarter of 1991-92 showed some improvement over the performance in the first quarter in rupee terms. As against a growth of 10.1% in April-June, 1991 over the corresponding period in 1990, exports registered a growth rate of 37.3% during July-September, 1991.

Exports to Rupee Payment Area have been deliberately compressed on account